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ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

1. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

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The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the frse". The term used for their religion is "tawahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

[779]

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity". The pious [788] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce [824] the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's baptism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

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A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "māmher" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school.

[792] When he becomes a monk, he is often appointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "lilo". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

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793 and he may also know grammatical Amharic, which has been
198 mastered by only a few hundred contemporary Amhara (in-
cluding the present emperor). This grammar is called
"sowassao", and contains subtle factitives, frequentatives,
etc.

793 In the higher clergy of church administration, a
combination of some scholarly accomplishment and politi-
cal astuteness is necessary. This next higher title is
"liqā kahēnāt" (lit. head ecclesiastic). Given a tem-
poral bishop's territory, he is named "pāpās" (evident-
ly a Greek derivation); or, if his new post is within
the spiritual, monastic system, "qomos", who "blesses
the cap of the monk" (i.e. can accept and supervise monas-
tic vows of lower-status ecclesiasts). This high cler-
gy is usually found at provincial capitals or nearby
monasteries.

Above this level is the very highest leadership
of the church, several "liqā pāpās", archbishops, of
noble ancestry, who are in line for the position of head
of monasteries and temporal church lands and properties,
the "schäge". This was traditionally the highest Abyss-
inian church officer (Amhara or Tigre). Until 1948, his
only superior, the "Abuna" (Patriarch), was a foreigner,
usually an Egyptian Copt sent from Alexandria. In 1948,
when this tie was severed, Schäge Basilios became almost
automatically the first native Abuna of Ethiopia. A
younger, somewhat more modern-minded element in the high
clergy is headed at present by Bishop (Papas) Theophilos,
who may be next in line for the highest office.

659 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream,
178 roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "māhabbār".

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This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

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"The killer? (It was) your husband;

The victim? (It was) your brother.

Great is your pain,

never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests,
e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord,
over that of her brother).

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Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

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"Vulgar Language" - "yäsyt qwanqwa" (lit.

woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yāwānd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yāwānd amareña" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195]

"syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish

"syetē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

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"Woman and donkey

(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,

(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by
hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own
dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm
where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal
and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates,
particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or
[524] speaking phrases of Gees. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which
they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?

(Reply) Udder of female donkey;

(Question) What is four?

(Reply) Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up
"secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between
syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by
youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty
is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father,
is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent
than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided,
no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the
patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random,
and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule"
conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

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He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemination and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Pabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

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"One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: 'Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?' Replied the priest: 'It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ('yāzārā' - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

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The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amaringa", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

was right, direct, correct
was honest, just
succeeded, prospered
became jealous, envious
became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

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Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

198 this esoteric raw material to develop special argots. The most notable ones are those used by traders; in magic; and by minstrels.

A merchant's argot (Footnote 91) uses Arabic loanwords, and also transforms the meaning or form of Amharic words, especially those that can have many alternate meanings. Trade routes travelled by merchants also carry distant lexical matter from Galla and Gurage - speaking provinces. Merchants utilize this argot as secret business codes.

Among practitioners of magic, the most famous argot is the "Zar" language (described in the section on "healing the spirit"). Like the other argots, this "language" has a solidly Amharic base, but this fact is not recognized by the Amharas themselves and has been discovered only by foreign linguistic scholars (Footnote 92). The "zar doctors" are of course careful to keep this fact a secret, for they claim that this language is not only "revealed" to them by the spirits, but that the spirit "talks through them", so that they themselves are free of responsibility for what they are saying while in a state of possession. Actually, the "zar language" contains purely grammatical Amharic, coded Amharic, transformed lexical matter, and loanwords. Scribes, "dābtāra", who perform amulet magic, impress their clients with a seemingly unintelligible, esoteric Amharic called "yādābtāra qwanqwa", (the language of the scribe), which often makes use of sowasso (grammar).

The argot of the minstrel, of the "amari", is a professional code used to communicate with other members of the troupe, e.g. to point out at which guest to direct songs of praise to obtain a reward, without *letting the audience become aware of this collusion (Footnote 93)*

Footnote 91 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot - Language, 1949 pp. 22-28, Vol. 25, No. 1.

Footnote 92 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, July. 1949, pp. 204-212

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e.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only during the cult services themselves, but also in daily life, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. They do not recognize that [797] it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

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114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau 103, who calls it an "argot":

"Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words.....

Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....

Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant chat, the horse, etc.....

The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....

"addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "tanqway", sorcerer, becomes "manqway".....

103. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

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"Arabic loanwords include:

- Alla (h) - master; God, heaven
- Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
- Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
- Qwaba - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

- farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "fārās", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
- waqiye yemmasgan - Waq is Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

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One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful male zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

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Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and similar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

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imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love-language" of Ethiopia.

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I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shlulh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

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*793 is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own grow-
869 ing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging

*[278] abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is
better equipped to utilize them; he has learned much of
the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to iden-
tify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are
frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies
• [198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes pos-
sible the acquisition of complex digams.

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In addition to acquiring individual recipes, deb-
tera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatises.

These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles
such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of
the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate
akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according
to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified ac-
cording to the part of the body that they affect, ar-
[177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after
close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented
on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the
remarkable similarities which they share with the third
and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

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While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes,
their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medi-
cine is limited by the character of their pathogenic in-
terests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-